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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East

Working paper submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. To achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and to establish a world free from nuclear weapons, all nuclear weapons must be eliminated. On this basis, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, pursuant to article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is not a substitute for the fulfilment of the legal obligations of the nuclear-weapon States under article VI of the Treaty and their unequivocal undertakings to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while supporting efforts to establish such zones, shares the conviction that such zones are not an end in themselves but rather a means for contributing to the nuclear non-proliferation objective and enhancing global and regional peace and security.

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to, and strongly supports, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, an initiative which was originally presented by Iran in 1974. Consistent with this principled position, Iran has already taken various practical steps aimed at making progress towards, inter alia, the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, in particular by accession to all the international instruments banning the weapons of mass destruction.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a party to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925 Geneva Protocol), the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) and a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and has placed all its nuclear facilities and activities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Such a high record of accession testifies to the strong commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to achieving the objective of the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, use or threat

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of use of weapons of mass destruction, in the Middle East in particular and at the global level in general.

4. The adoption, by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, of the resolution on the Middle East, as an essential and integral element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the Treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995, marks a turning point in advancing the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always supported and called for the speedy implementation of this resolution and the full realization of its goals and objectives. Similarly, on the same grounds, Iran supported the adoption, in 2010, of a plan of action on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

5. The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its deepest concern over the persistent and long delay in the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the lack of any progress in the implementation of the respective plan of action of the 2010 Review Conference. Iran stresses that, as reaffirmed by the successive review conferences since 1995, the resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. This, without doubt, is the individual and collective responsibility of all States parties to the Treaty, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, especially the three depositary States of the Treaty that co-sponsored the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It should be recalled that the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference had clearly stipulated that "the States parties renew their resolve to undertake, individually and collectively, all necessary measures aimed at its prompt implementation."

6. The adoption of the 2010 plan of action on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which called for the convening of a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, taking the 1995 resolution as its terms of reference, although very late, was indeed the right decision in the right direction. Iran supported the adoption of that plan of action and called for its timely implementation. In addition to conducting several rounds of consultations with the facilitator of the conference, on 6 November 2012, Iran officially declared its decision to participate in that conference, which had been scheduled to be held in December 2012 in Helsinki.

7. However, not only was the 2010 plan of action on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East not implemented and, consequently, the 2012 conference not convened, but in addition, the 2015 Review Conference was unable to reach an agreement on its outcome document as a result of the objection of only the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Canada to a decision contained therein on the implementation of the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East.

8. Now, 23 years after the adoption of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and eight years after the adoption of the 2010 action plan for the implementation of that resolution, and despite the strong support of the overwhelming majority of the States parties, as well as the efforts by Iran and all Arab countries in the region for their implementation, there are valid questions: why were they not implemented, and why have all efforts under the 2005 and 2015 Review Conferences for their implementation failed? The answer is clear: the Israeli regime, which is the only non-party to the Treaty and also the only possessor of nuclear weapons in the region, is the main obstacle to the establishment of such a zone. In addition, in practice, certain parties to the Treaty, by representing the Israeli regime in the review conferences, object to decisions on the actual realization of this zone. One day after the conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference, the Israeli regime, in its statement dated 29 May 2010, rejected outright the Final Document of that Conference as

"deeply flawed" and stated that "Israel will not be able to take part in its implementation."

9. The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference called on all States to refrain from undertaking any measures that preclude the achievement of the objective of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. However, the United States, as one of the co-sponsors of the 1995 resolution and as one of the co-conveners of the 2012 conference, by supporting the obstructive positions of the Israeli regime and setting preconditions for the implementation of the 2010 action plan, acted as a stumbling block in the way of convening the 2012 conference and, on 23 November 2012, unilaterally announced that the conference could not be convened and that it would not support a conference in which Israel would be subject to pressure or isolation. This unilateral decision of the United States was wholly inconsistent with its declaratory commitment to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

10. Subsequently, during the 2015 Review Conference, Israeli officials expressed concern over taking any decision by the Conference "to force Israel to come clean on its nuclear capabilities" as an essential step towards establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In order to avoid that, Israel placed the United States under pressure to block such a decision. When the United States, along with the United Kingdom and Canada, objected to the outcome document of the Conference, which contained a decision on the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 action plan on the Middle East, the Prime Minister of Israel thanked the United States President for such action.

11. But why was the Israeli regime not willing to support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and why is it still not willing to do so? First and foremost, because this regime possesses nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East requires the prompt and unconditional accession of Israel, as a non-nuclear weapon party, to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, renouncing possession of nuclear weapons and placing all of its clandestine nuclear activities and facilities under the IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

12. Moreover, a short look at the practices of the Israeli regime in the Middle East and its records in the fields of disarmament and international security provides a clear picture of the seriousness of the security threat posed by this regime against the peace and security of the States parties to the Treaty in the Middle East. It also proves, once again, how essential and urgent the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction is for the maintenance of peace and security in the region and beyond. That record includes, but is not limited to, the following: since its inception, the Israeli regime has waged 17 wars, which means 1 war almost every four years; committed aggression against all of its neighbours, without exception; even attacked several other non-neighbouring countries in the region and beyond; attacked, in 1981, the peaceful nuclear installations of a State party to the Treaty in the Middle East (in this case, the Security Council strongly condemned the military attack by Israel as a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct); threatened to attack the peaceful nuclear facilities of States parties to the Treaty in the region that are under IAEA safeguards; still has under occupation the territories of several neighbouring countries, as it is called, in United Nations resolutions, the "occupying Power"; is not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty or any other international instrument banning weapons of mass destruction, in defiance of repeated calls, including by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the General Conference of IAEA, the review conferences of the parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the summit and ministerial conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation; and is the only possessor of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including hundreds of nuclear warheads, in the Middle East region.

13. In addition, such realities make it completely clear that the only way to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is for the international community to exert and maintain sustained pressure on the Israeli regime to compel it to accede, promptly and unconditionally, as a non-nuclear weapon party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to place all of its nuclear activities and installations under the full-scope IAEA safeguards. This approach was acknowledged by the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences, which reaffirmed "the importance of Israel's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East".

14. In this context, Iran invites the 2020 Review Conference to establish a subsidiary body under its Main Committee II to consider the urgent implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East and, building upon past experience, agree on concrete steps for their speedy implementation.

15. Iran also proposes the following elements for inclusion in the Final Document of the 2020 Review Conference:

Noting the consensus reached by the General Assembly since its thirty-fifth session that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East would greatly enhance international peace and security;

Expressing concern about the lack of progress towards the implementation of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, as well as the action plan on the Middle East adopted at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

Reaffirming the urgent need for the prompt and full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East;

Reiterating the firm commitment of all States parties to the Treaty, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to undertake all necessary measures aimed at the prompt and full implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East and to extend their cooperation in this regard;

Emphasizing the essential role of the United Nations in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East;

Expressing serious concern about the continued existence in the Middle East of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, as well as the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons to the security and stability of the Middle East region;

Expressing deepest concern over the fact that the refusal of Israel is the main obstacle to the implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 plan of action on the Middle East;

Reaffirming the importance of the accession of Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty without further delay and the placement of all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East;

Calling upon Israel to renounce possession of nuclear weapons and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards as an important confidence-building measure among all States of the region and as a step towards enhancing peace and security;

Deciding to establish a standing committee, comprising the members of its Bureau to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conference concerning the prompt accession of Israel to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the placement of all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards, and to report to the 2025 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee meetings;

Reaffirming the commitment of all States parties to the effective prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, materials and facilities, resources or devices and the extension of know-how or any kind of assistance in the nuclear, scientific or technological fields to Israel so long as it remains a non-party to the Treaty and has not placed all of its nuclear activities and facilities under the full-scope IAEA safeguards.